

October 19, 2000

Honorable Donna E. Shalala

Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W. Rom 615F
Washington, D.C. 20201

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Dear Secretary Shalala:

My name is Cary Michael Bennett. I have been a licensed, board certified hearing instrument specialist for eight plus years. I work for a small business in Akron Ohio, and operate a hearing center, where I currently service over 400 hearing impaired patients. At age 52, this is my chosen profession, and one I am hoping from which to retire.

I am aware, that after 7 years of inaction, the FDA, under the guidance of Commissioner Jane Henney MD, is rushing to publish a proposed hearing aid rule, that will change the nature of the hearing aide dispensing business and effectively put me out of work. The new rule would usurp the federal authority over hearing aide sales and revert to a state level determination of dispensary, requiring testing done solely by audiologist, putting them in an exclusive role in the hearing aid delivery system. This proposal is unwarranted, and unfair to those of us that have devoted our careers to this endeavor, and to the millions in need of hearing health care, most of whom are seniors. It would do so by limiting access as well as making it more costly.

Sec. Shalala, I urge you to carefully weigh the impact of this new rule, on small business, the hearing impaired of our nation, and my job. I sincerely hope you will reject this ill-conceived proposal. I may be reached at home by phone @ 330-325-9280 or email cmbennett@mail.com or at my office 330-673-8141.

Thanks in advance for the consideration of my views on this subject.

Best Regards,

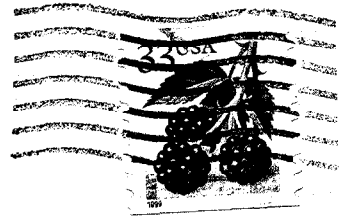
Cary Michael Bennett

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